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Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Fifty-second session

Summary record of the 24th meeting
Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Tuesday, 13 May 2014, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Kedzia

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (*continued*)

Second periodic report of Uzbekistan (continued) (E/C.12/UZB/2; E/C.12/WG/UZB/Q/2; E/C.12/UZB/Q/2/Add.1; HRI/CORE/UZB/2010)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Uzbekistan took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Alimukhamedov** (Uzbekistan) said that the high rate of demographic growth in Uzbekistan had an impact on both the labour market and the social security system. Some 18 million people out of an overall population of around 30 million were of working age. There were currently about 600,000 unemployed people, representing about 5 per cent of the working population, and unemployment rates were particularly high in Qoraqalpog'iston and other areas affected by the environmental disaster near the Aral Sea. The Government monitored the labour market closely, with special attention paid to the gender and age of members of the workforce. The female unemployment rate was not significantly different from the overall rate, but the Government had adopted specific activities to encourage employment among women, including job-creation programmes for small and medium enterprises, especially those engaged in providing services. Another means of creating employment among women was by encouraging the development of family enterprises. Such efforts were especially important for women, many of whom had to carry out tasks in the home while working.

3. The Government had for the past five years implemented a job-creation programme which had provided about 1 million jobs. The programme was adopted and confirmed by both houses of the Oliy Majlis (the national parliament), and the parliament ensured effective oversight over its implementation. A failure to implement the programme would amount to a failure to apply the law. The programmes were drawn up on the basis of studies of the actual situation prevailing in the labour market in some 200 regions and towns nationwide, taking account of labour market forecasts. As the annual influx of graduates and young people into the labour market amounted to about 500 000 people, it was necessary to at least keep pace with that number in order to avoid increases in the unemployment rate. All told, about 1 million jobs were created every year, but since some of them were temporary in nature, combating unemployment had been difficult. The figures for unemployment were more or less in keeping with global forecasts from the International Labour Organization (ILO), according to which globally some 60 million new jobs would be required over the next 10 years.

4. Investments in sectoral and structural programmes had helped spur construction, and a dedicated programme encouraged entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises. Other activities promoted such job-creation activities as infrastructure development, work-at-home programmes and support for farm production, and all were fully in line with the Global Jobs Pact. Particular attention was paid to ensuring participation by commercial banks and the use of microcredit, funding for which had been increasing by about 30 per cent a year, and which was particularly useful for the development of small businesses.

5. According to figures from the World Bank, in 2001 the proportion of the population living in poverty had stood at 27.5 per cent; by 2010 it had fallen to 17 per cent; and it had since declined further, to 15 per cent. The first of the Millennium Development Goals consisted in ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth so as to reduce poverty.

By 2015, the proportion of people living in poverty in Uzbekistan would indeed be halved, and it would fall still further by 2020. Uzbekistan had not eradicated poverty, but it had clearly made progress.

6. The Government had a comprehensive policy addressing issues such as health, education, social development, living standards and access to social services, with specific goals for the period through 2015. One chapter of the policy document covered strategic priorities for social welfare and called for specific increases in minimum wages and pensions.

7. Uzbekistan had adopted a series of measures to combat the effects of the world financial crisis between 2009 and 2012, and they were described in detail in an official document. The Government still maintained programmes to assist specific vulnerable and needy groups such as single-parent families, elderly people requiring care, people living with disabilities and people suffering from diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS or diabetes in dealing with the continuing effects of the crisis.

8. As the head of delegation had said, the environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region was a problem not only for Uzbekistan and the region, but for the entire world. Some 15 per cent of the country's people, living in 40 per cent of its territory, were affected by that problem. The Government encouraged employment as a material basis for raising living standards and provided targeted social protection for the population and for support of the social services infrastructure. Economic growth in Qoraqalpog'iston and other regions had recently reached 6 to 7 per cent a year for industry and 3.5 per cent for agriculture, with still higher growth in services. About 300,000 jobs were created annually in Qoraqalpog'iston, in particular related to cattle and livestock production on private and State farms, thus providing both income and a level of social protection. Many people employed to raise cattle in the informal sector were thus registered as being employed, which gave them entitlement to social services.

9. The Government made efforts to integrate informally employed workers in the country's labour relations system and social protection schemes. The Committee should draw the attention of international financing bodies to the fact that major operations were required in the Aral Sea region to boost employment, for example through support for small businesses and the establishment of high-tech companies to process local commodities. Soft credit and measures to provide work for women and others who had to work from home were especially useful in combating unemployment in that region.

10. The Employment Act instituted a quota system for the hiring of persons with disabilities. The Act had recently been amended to allow the heads of local administrations to establish additional quotas at enterprises with over 20 workers for the employment of members of other vulnerable groups, including graduates of training programmes, former inmates and parents with large families. Every year, about 90,000 new jobs were covered by such quotas.

11. The funding system for pensions was basically a pay-as-you-go scheme, though there were elements of pre-funding as well. Plans to improve the pension system included the optimization of the benefits system, which would link levels of benefits to individuals' contribution levels, a particularly sensitive issue. People working from home under contract with major companies were considered as employees and thus contributed to and were covered by the pension scheme. As the old system of work registration booklets was about to be replaced with a new system, it was very important to establish a unified and comprehensive pension registration system in the near future.

12. The pension budget was not in the red. The population was ageing, but less quickly than in many other countries. There were currently no plans to increase the pensionable age or to switch to a pre-funded pension system.

13. Children were currently authorized to work from the age of 16 and, with special permission, from the age of 15. Uzbekistan had ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). In 2013, a monitoring exercise had been carried out during the cotton harvest in cooperation with the ILO to determine the extent of the use of child labour in that sector. Ten independent ILO experts had been given full and free access to workers engaged in the harvest. They had conducted nearly 1,600 interviews during some 800 visits and had reported to the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations that there had been no massive or coerced use of child labour. The 53 isolated cases of children found to be working in the harvest had been reported, and the children had been returned to their families.

14. In April 2014 a memorandum of understanding had been signed with the ILO to establish a country programme on decent work, with three strategic priorities: advocacy for the ratification of more ILO Conventions; expansion of decent work opportunities, in particular for young people; and improvement in the conditions of employment and capacity-building for the social partners, including the extension of labour protection to persons working from home.

15. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that, demographically, the population of Uzbekistan was quite young. Some 40 per cent of the people were under 18 years old and 60 per cent were under 30. Pensioners accounted for about 7 per cent of the population. Over 50 per cent of the country's businesses were small or medium-sized enterprises. The private sector accounted for all of the country's produce and cotton production.

16. An important conference had been held in 2013, with some 300 experts discussing the economic transformations in Uzbekistan. It had published a report, which he would make available to the Committee.

17. The Government had reformed the system for the enforcement of sentences, placing additional emphasis on rehabilitation. In the past 10 years the prison population had been reduced to 40 per cent of its previous level and there was now half as much recidivism. Former inmates received assistance in finding employment from organizations such as the Mahalla Charitable Fund. The United Nations Development Programme had worked with the Uzbek authorities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to set up projects to provide jobs for persons living with disabilities. He welcomed the submission of the alternative report on Uzbekistan and said that the authorities would pay particular attention to its content.

18. **Mr. Alimukhamedov** (Uzbekistan) said that the adoption of the Family Entrepreneurship Act had helped to integrate workers in the informal sector into the official economy. The new law defined entrepreneurs and family businesses and helped to solve problems related to registration, labour relations, property rights and access to credit for some 2 million workers engaged in cottage industries, services, trades and crafts.

19. While there were some homeless people in Uzbekistan, the scale of the problem was nowhere near as great as in other countries. The Government encouraged individual housing construction in rural areas. In 2013, projects had been conducted in 350 rural areas, with the construction of some 1.5 million m^2 of housing in over 10,000 homes, fitted with modern conveniences, representing an increase of about 18 per cent over the figure for the previous year. There were plans to increase annual construction to about 41,000 units a year. Funding for the scaled-up programme would come to about $2.2 billion, with some $500 million provided in loans from the Asian Development Bank and about as much earmarked for mortgage assistance. The disbursement of loans on favourable terms was planned for the next five years to encourage housing construction.

20. Trade unions were the most powerful public organizations in Uzbekistan, with total memberships of over 6 million. The right of association was recognized by law, and

employers were obliged to facilitate the formation of representative workers' associations. Collective bargaining mechanisms were used to resolve many industrial relations issues. The rights to bargain collectively and to strike were not covered by specific laws but were the subject of general provisions of the Labour Code protecting the right of workers to defend their interests.

21. The Development and Reconstruction Fund had become a major financial institution, with holdings of over $15 billion, more or less equivalent to the amount of annual investment in the entire country. The Fund currently helped to finance some 80 strategic projects valued at nearly $30 billion. In 2013, 33 major projects amounting to $700 million had benefited from financing from the Fund, an increase of 24 per cent over the 2012 level.

22. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that a conference held in early 2013 in Tashkent had considered Uzbekistan's experience in encouraging individual housing construction in both rural and urban areas. Hundreds of experts had attended, including participants from international organizations and financial institutions and from over 60 countries. He presented the Committee with a publication containing information on the conference and its recommendations, which in large measure were supportive of the Government's achievements in that area. The Asian Development Bank had recently approved a $500 million, five-year support plan for rural housing development in Uzbekistan.

23. **Mr. Alimukhamedov** (Uzbekistan) said that, according to current economic forecasts, the inflation rate was expected to decline from 7.9 per cent to 6.5 per cent by 2015 and that official devaluation of the currency would fall from 11 per cent to 8 per cent. Assets of commercial banks were expected to rise to 40 per cent of gross domestic product, and their holdings should amount to about 15 per cent of capital by 2015. The position of the M2 money supply too was expected to improve. The country had clear goals for economic policies to defend the welfare of the population.

24. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that, under the Family Code, the age of consent for marriage was 17 for females (except in special circumstances, when it could be reduced to 16), and 18 for males. The discrepancy had been noted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, both of which had called on the Government to set the age at 18 for everyone. A group of members of parliament was currently working on a draft law to bring the age of marriage into line with those recommendations.

25. **Mr. Khudayarov** (Uzbekistan) said that since independence Uzbekistan had established a unique medical system that provided high-quality health care, in particular through specialized hospitals that met international standards in both the cities and the provinces. In addition, there were some 3,200 rural health facilities throughout the country; they were provided with modern medical equipment and first aid was given not by medical assistants, but by general practitioners at such facilities. In densely populated areas, the health services were provided by well-equipped medical facilities and specialized provincial polyclinics. The country had 10 larger, national-level medical centres specializing in cardiology and heart surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, endocrinology, urology, pulmonology and other fields, staffed by highly trained, qualified personnel.

26. The improvement of the health-care system had involved changes in the thinking and consciousness of the population. The transmission of congenital diseases had been reduced through the introduction of mandatory premarital testing, and the Government was encouraging marriage in the age range defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as optimal for childbearing, between the ages of 18 and 30.

27. Uzbekistan had acceded to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and had adopted regulations to restrict the sale and consumption of alcohol and tobacco

products and ensure the inclusion of appropriate health warnings on packaging. Educational institutions offered training to promote healthy lifestyles and ran seminars on the prevention of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS for which young persons constituted the primary target audience.

28. With technical support from the WHO Regional Office, the authorities had drafted a national plan to combat non-infectious diseases which covered the problems associated with alcohol and drug abuse and was based on the WHO STEPwise approach to surveillance (STEPS). Also with WHO support, clinical guidance for the treatment of such diseases was being formulated and research into tobacco abuse among schoolchildren, particularly those between the ages of 13 and 15, was under way.

29. A recent Ministry of Health decree established the level of care and assistance that should be offered to drug users. Consultations and treatment were provided free of charge while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity, if desired, in order to prevent stigmatization, particularly for HIV/AIDS sufferers. A medical and social rehabilitation programme encompassing individual and group psychotherapy was available to motivate former substance abusers and support their reintegration within the labour market. Some institutions also offered labour therapy, under which patients had the opportunity to learn specific skills such as shoemaking.

30. A pilot opioid substitution therapy programme had begun in 2006 and ended in 2011. In view of its success, the Government planned to extend the pilot into the regions, particularly those bordering Afghanistan where the risk of drug trafficking was greatest. Alternative treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy were also offered to drug-dependent persons to help to optimize their physical, mental and social rehabilitation. Between 3,000 and 4,000 substance abusers received treatment each year, contributing to a downtrend in drug dependency, particularly among young persons, and a parallel decline in HIV infection.

31. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) drew the Committee's attention to document A/66/648, which provided details of an international symposium on mother and child health care held at Tashkent in 2011. At the conference the Uzbek model had been recognized as an effective strategy for reaching global development goals, including the relevant Millennium Development Goals.

32. **Mr. Toshmatov** (Uzbekistan), highlighting the country's recognized leadership in integrated water resource management, said that the Government had worked hard to diversify agricultural production and move towards less water-intensive crops such as grain and grapes, with corresponding reductions in rice- and cotton-growing. With support from international organizations including the Asian Development Bank, it had adopted innovative water-saving techniques including drip feeds and flexible piping, which had helped to reduce water extraction per hectare of irrigated land by around 18,000 cubic metres over the past two decades.

33. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) drew the Committee's attention to two documents on the principled use of water resources which the Government of Uzbekistan had submitted to the General Assembly, recalling that around 60 million people in Central Asia were dependent on just two rivers for their drinking water and that rational use of water resources was a major problem.

34. **Mr. Khudayarov** (Uzbekistan) said that water shortages were exacerbated by the extremely uneven distribution of resources. In numerous parts of the country, whether for natural, climatic or man-made reasons, access to good-quality drinking water remained a problem, with corresponding impacts on economic development, sanitation and morbidity. Water supply to rural populations had had to be increased significantly in recent years in order to keep pace with annual population growth, and institutional efforts to improve

supply, quality and infrastructures were ongoing. National standards for water quality, safety and monitoring were in line with those established by WHO. The use of pesticides in farming had been considerably reduced, but soil and subsoil pollution still exceeded acceptable levels in some cases.

35. The tragedy of the Aral Sea was recognized as a major environmental disaster, particularly for the south of the country. However, the less widely recognized cross-border pollution being caused by the Tajik Aluminium Company (TALCO) was also having extremely damaging effects on farming and health and the Government had written to the United Nations Secretary-General to request assistance (document A/67/872).

36. All persons who were evicted from their homes received mandatory compensation.

37. **Ms. Ravensberg** asked whether the State party had a national health insurance programme and whether drug users were criminalized. If so, how were they expected to register for detoxification programmes?

38. **Ms. Shin** asked whether a monitoring system was in place to ensure compliance with the legal provisions that outlawed polygamy; whether any research to assess compliance had been conducted since criminalization; and whether there had been any cases of forced marriage.

39. **Mr. Sadi** asked whether the State party had suspended the provision of opioid substitution therapy and reverted to traditional treatment methods, as certain NGO reports had indicated, and, if so, why. In view of the former method's proven efficacy, he urged the State party to reconsider its position.

40. **Mr. Kerdoun** asked whether water resources were managed by State-owned or private enterprises; if the latter, whether water rates were determined by those companies; whether different rates applied for domestic and corporate use; and whether rates were uniform or based on consumption. Data showing the breakdown of supply and consumption between rural and urban areas would be appreciated.

41. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that access to water was considered a human right in Uzbekistan and that the Government had been one of the initiators of the draft declaration on the right to water currently under consideration within the United Nations system. The country's water resources were managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Detailed information about pricing schedules would be provided subsequently in writing.

42. **Mr. Alimukhamedov** (Uzbekistan) said that the national plan for improving the well-being of the nation had established specific targets for improving access to high-quality water, attesting to the strategic importance accorded to water management within Government policy. Corporate water rates were higher than domestic rates.

43. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that recent research conducted by an NGO-run centre of public opinion had found that the vast majority of the population was in favour of raising the minimum age of marriage for women, in line with the minimum age for men, and was against polygamy. Polygamy was expressly criminalized in a specific article of the Criminal Code. In the previous year there had been two cases of bride kidnapping, which was a ritualistic tradition practised mainly by nomadic communities but was a criminal offence under the law. There had also been instances of early marriage involving girls aged 15 and 16. Women's NGOs had a key role in monitoring all such practices and had carried out more than 5,000 awareness-raising events in 2013.

44. **Mr. Toshmatov** (Uzbekistan) said that a law to combat trafficking in human beings had been adopted in 2008 and that Uzbekistan had acceded to a number of international instruments, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized

Crime and the Optional Protocol thereto. National anti-trafficking action plans were adopted every two years. The first such plan, adopted in 2008, had provided for the creation of an interdepartmental anti-trafficking commission which met every three months and was composed of both State and civil society representatives. Other advances had included the establishment of an assistance, support and rehabilitation centre in 2010, which had since helped over 1,000 victims of trafficking, and the conclusion of numerous agreements with multinational organizations and neighbouring countries. The mass media and civil society were supporting wide-scale efforts to prevent would-be migrants from falling into slavery and other abusive practices. A recent survey had confirmed that the population recognized trafficking as a serious threat, attesting to the success of awareness-raising efforts.

45. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that the sale, possession and use of drugs were offences under the Criminal Code. There was some logic in treating alcoholics as patients but that was not the case for drug addicts.

46. **Mr. Khudayarov** (Uzbekistan) said that the success of the pilot opioid substitution therapy project carried out in the capital city had been assessed on the basis of the related WHO general protocol. After the project, improvements had been visible in a number of indicators, including drug dependence and drug-related crime. The next steps were to adopt international standards, to train further specialist personnel, to extend the pilot throughout the country and to incorporate a work skills upgrade programme. Methadone would be removed from the category A list of prohibited drugs and its use would be authorized for limited rehabilitation purposes. Further research would be conducted to shed light on the causes of the psychological tensions in society behind drug abuse, including visits to countries considered, by WHO, to offer examples of best practice.

47. The Government was in the process of drafting the normative documents that would provide for the introduction of a State medical insurance scheme. It was also working to improve access to health care in rural areas and to that end had established over 3,500 regional facilities that worked to prevent disease at the local level.

48. **Ms. Ravensberg** asked what the State party was doing to address concerns about the physical barriers and lack of suitably qualified staff that made mainstream schools inaccessible to children with disabilities; about the generally poor quality of education in rural areas; and about the extended school absences of children in rural areas during cotton-harvesting periods. What was being done to guarantee the right to education for all those children? She also sought information about Internet access in schools, particularly in rural areas and for children with disabilities, and about measures to address the continuing gender imbalance in education. Figures for women's participation in higher education would be appreciated.

49. **Mr. Marchán Romero** requested clarification about the Cabinet of Ministers' decision on minimum rates of remuneration for authors, including about why the decision applied only to certain types of use of literary and artistic works. He failed to see why the work of the many ethnic cultural centres in the country should result in ethnic and national groups not considering themselves to be ethnic minorities, and he stressed that ethnic minorities should enjoy the right of self-identification.

50. **Mr. Sadi** asked whether schools in rural areas were segregated by sex and, if so, whether there were any plans to make them co-educational. He also wondered to what extent the various ethnic groups were integrated in the school system. He wished to know the school dropout rate in rural areas and asked whether corporal punishment was still used in practice, including in the home, despite being banned by law.

51. **Mr. Abashidze** (Country Rapporteur) asked to what extent government efforts to prevent children's involvement in the cotton harvest had been successful and what measures were being taken to eliminate barriers limiting access to education for children

with disabilities and to adapt school curricula to their needs. He also asked why there had been a decline in the number of children studying in certain minority languages in schools. He requested information about any special measures being taken to benefit the Tajik minority living in the south of the country.

The meeting was suspended at 5.05 p.m. and resumed at 5.15 p.m.

52. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that education up to grade 12 was compulsory in Uzbekistan, including specialized education at the secondary level. There were about 10,000 educational institutions at the primary, secondary and higher education levels. Uzbekistan had achieved the targets set out in the Millennium Development Goals relating to education, and the literacy rate was high among young persons 15 to 25 years of age. Education was offered in eight different languages; the decrease in the number of students studying in languages such as Tajik was simply a natural phenomenon without any hidden causes. With help from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Government had recently turned its attention towards ensuring inclusive education for children with disabilities; for example, textbooks and other publications had been made available in Braille editions. The Republican Centre for the Social Adaptation of Children also did much work to benefit children with disabilities. There was no difference in the level of education in rural compared with urban areas. Efforts were being made to ensure equal access to higher education for men and women.

53. **Mr. Khudayarov** (Uzbekistan) said reports claiming that children were mobilized to pick cotton for up to three months were unfounded. Thanks to the introduction of new breeds of cotton, the harvest period now lasted for no longer than one month. Private companies involved in cotton-picking had no incentive to hire children at additional cost to themselves. While in some cases the children of farmers might help their parents with the harvest after school, such practices did not constitute one of the worst forms of child labour. Children were not forced to work during the harvest, and no schools were closed for that purpose. That situation had been confirmed by UNICEF and ILO through their own field studies. Moreover, the country was shifting to mechanized picking, which meant that fewer labourers would be required.

54. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that children were allowed to work only if their employment did not hinder their studies or their health and if their parents had given their consent. His delegation would provide further information in writing about the minimum rates of remuneration for authors.

55. **Mr. Nurmetov** (Uzbekistan) said that the ethnic cultural centres played an important role in strengthening harmony among the many ethnic and religious groups in the country.

56. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that the term "national minority" was not used in Uzbek law. Instead, the many different ethnic groups were referred to as "nationalities and peoples", as the term "minority" could be considered discriminatory. Equality among all peoples was a reality in the country, not only in law but also in practice. Many ethnic groups, including the Tajiks, had found themselves divided by the national borders created during the Soviet era. The Government therefore emphasized the importance of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. By law, judicial proceedings were conducted in the language spoken by the majority of the population in the area where the proceedings took place.

57. Schools were not segregated by gender even in rural areas. All forms of corporal punishment were prohibited and punishable by law, including in the home. Internet use had become an essential part of life and was helping to eliminate any discrepancies in living conditions between rural and urban areas. Health care and education were also widely available in rural areas.

58. **Mr. Marchán Romero** asked whether the principle of self-identification was recognized in national law.

59. **Ms. Shin** pointed out the difference between the concept of equal pay for equal work and that of equal remuneration for work of equal value, as set out in article 7 of the Covenant, and she asked whether the State party had a system for comparing different types of work and determining which ones were of equal value.

60. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that the rights of all ethnic groups were set out in detail in the Constitution, along with the principles of equality and non-discrimination, but that there was no separate law on cultural autonomy for those groups. The Government believed that the issue of non-discrimination was already adequately addressed and that separate legislation on the subject was not needed.

61. **Mr. Alimukhamedov** (Uzbekistan) said that the Labour Code prohibited discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sex or any other circumstance not related to one's professional qualifications. Wages were stipulated in employment contracts and must not be lower than the minimum wage, which had been significantly increased in 2012.

62. **Mr. Saidov** (Uzbekistan) said that Uzbekistan had ratified the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and did its best to fulfil all its international obligations. He thanked the Committee members for their participation in the constructive and cordial dialogue and expressed great appreciation for the spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding that had been evident throughout. His Government would discuss the Committee's recommendations with parliament and civil society organizations and would inform the general public about the dialogue via the Internet and other forms of mass media. It would also develop a national action plan for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. The Government had prepared booklets containing Uzbek translations of the general comments issued by two other treaty bodies and would prepare a similar booklet of the Committee's general comments prior to submission of the next periodic report. Several major events on various social issues would soon take place in Uzbekistan, such as an international conference on the nation's food programme.

63. **Mr. Abashidze** thanked the delegation and his fellow Committee members for their active participation in the dialogue, the purpose of which was to contribute to the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights for the benefit of the people of Uzbekistan. He hoped that the delegation would find the Committee's recommendations constructive. He welcomed the delegation's plans to issue a booklet containing translations of the Committee's general comments. He hoped that the State party would take measures to prevent bride kidnapping and that its efforts to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights would live up to the aspirations of its people.

64. **The Chairperson** expressed his appreciation for the delegation's efforts to provide sincere and comprehensive responses to the Committee's questions. There was room for further discussion of several issues, and he therefore looked forward to resuming the dialogue in the future. He appreciated the inclusion of high-level representatives from various ministries in the delegation, as the cooperation of all government departments was essential to the successful implementation of the Covenant. He welcomed the delegation's commitment to draw up an action plan for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations. He was impressed by the number of publications issued and activities carried out by the Government and looked forward to future exchanges with the State party.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.